THE FRENCH CHARITY:

WRITTEN

In *French* by an *Engliſh* Gentleman, upon occaſion of Prince *Harcourt's* coming into *ENGLAND*;

And tranſlated into Engliſh by F. S. J. E.

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THE FRENCH CHARITY.

ALthough we ſee that naturall cauſes produce ſometimes contrary effects, that the Sun which draws up the Clouds can alſo ſcatter them, that the ſame Wind both lights and blow's out the taper, that Vipers ſerve for wholeſome medicaments, and Scorpions carry about them an Antidote to their own poiſon: it is not ſo neverthelesſe in morall and politick affairs, wherein that which is once ill, is alwayes accounted ſuch; from whence is begot in us that quality which we call Experience, *whereby wiſe men are accuſtomed to judge of preſent and future actions by thoſe that are paſt. Which is the foundation whereupon all Monarchies and Republicks have eſtabliſhed the Maximes of their ſubſiſtence, and found out both what they ought to follow and what to avoid.*

The Charity which France *hath teſtified to pacify our differences is ſo great that it is become incredible, ſo unſeaſonable that it is ſuſpected, and ſo contrary to their former proceedings that it is quite otherwayes underſtood. Philoſophers ſay, we cannot paſſe from one extremity to another without ſome mean; I cannot ſee by what ſteps they are come to this perfect goodneſs, nor what good* Genius *can have made them in an inſtant ſo good friends of ſuch dangerous neighbours to us. I will paſſe my cenſure upon nothing, yet let me have the liberty to judge of all. I find ſo great a wonder in this change, that I find a conflict in my ſelf to believe it. It is no common marvell, that thoſe who have for ſo long a time beheld all* Europe *in a flame, and could not be moved by the bloud and deſtruction of ſo many people to caſt thereon one drop of water, ſhould now have their bowells ſo tender as to compaſſionate the diſſenſions ariſing in a corner of the world which hath alwayes bin fatall to them; That thoſe who have made it their cheefeſt intereſt to divide us, ſhould now make it their glory to reunite us; That thoſe who place their reſt in our troubles, ſhould now apply their cares for our repoſe; and that*

after

after they have caſt us down headlong, they ſhould reach us a plank for to come aſhore. Let the wiſe Reader here (whilſt I determine nothing) allow me at leaſt a little diſtruſt; it is the Mother of Safety. The Trojans, *who could not be overcome by Armes, periſh't by a pledge of peace. All the* French *civilityes are faire and good; but in the bottome*

Quicquid id eſt, timeo Gallos, & dona ferentes.

Let us ſee what reaſons can oblige them to intereſt themſelves ſo paſſionately in our agreement. Is it Religion? ſurely no; for that which they profeſſe is contrary to that of this Kingdome; and the little Charity *they have for their own, ought not to perſwade us that they have much for ours. Is it for the inclination they have to peace? ſurely no; for if they eſteemed it a benefit, they would ſeek it firſt for themſelves. It is perhaps for an acknowledgement of their obligations to us in the late warres, and for the aſſiſtance we gave to thoſe of* Rochel. *I, this would be truely Chriſtian indeed, to render us good for evill. They will ſay that they are the bands of blood and parentage, which bind them to the* Queen; *and yet they have let the Mother beg her ſubſiſtence*

ſtence and retreat among ſtrangers; which ſhe could not find with them; and having beheld her without pity and ſuccour in her greateſt extremities, they adviſe to offer her a remedy upon the declining of her ill. But if this be the reaſon of their admittance, I conceive them no lawfull nor indifferent Mediators, ſince they are ſo much concern'd in one of the parties. They will whiſper us in the eare, that the deſigne is to pacify us, and to ingage us in a league with them againſt the Spaniard; although at the ſame time they deſigne Ambaſſadours for Munſter to endeavour a peace with him. O, we ſhould wrong them very much to believe it, though they might ſeem in an humour to deſire it of us; They are too gallant ſpirited to pretend it, they know that we are better adviſed then to ſerve them to pull their Cheſnut out of the fire; that a body recovering health from a long ſickneſſe ought not to expoſe it ſelf to a violent agitation; that the State will find it ſelf loaden with debts, and the Subject exhauſted by Contributions; that we ought to preferre the evident profit of traffick before the uncertain vanity of a conqueſt; that Ieaulouſies being not yet removed, nor emulations ſuppreſt, all kind of arming would be ſuſpected

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by the State, fearing least some under pretense of a forrain warre might study private revenge, or the oppression of the publick liberty; & that in the end it will be our gain to see them deal with Spain, *and to make our advantage of their troubles, or not to meddle at all with them, unlesse by adding secretly (according to the revolution of affairs) a little weight to them that shall be found the lighter. If then it be none of these motives, it remains that it must be either Generosity, or deceit. O* Generosity *(that hast so long since withdrawn thy self to heaven, there to keep company with the faire* Astræa, *or rather, who wer't buried in* France *in the Sepulchre of Monsieur* Gonin*) is it possible that thou shouldst be risen again, or that* France *should have recall'd thee with her exiles since the death of her King; and that the first labour she should put thee to should be in favour of* England, *against whom but few dayes since she shewed such violent resentments, for an offence received by a pretended violation of the treaties which had past between us? Truely if it be she, we must reverence her with extraordinary respects; but before we give her the Honours due unto her, we must know her, for feare of Idolatry in*

adoring her masque for her self, or embracing a clond in stead of a Goddesse. Let us give a thrust with our launce into the Trojan *horse, to see if there be no ambush within.*

In walking lately with some French *Gentlemen (as this nation is free enough of their discourse) a word escaped from one of the company without making reflexion (as I think) of what Countrey I was, That amongst their Prophets there was one which said, That* the Conquest of England was promised to their young King. *This thought cast into the aire though inconsideratly, seemed to me very considerable; and having given me an occasion to reflect upon all things both past and present, it served me as a light to guide me in the obscurity of this Labyrinth, upon which before I had reasoned but superficially. From thence being returned to my lodging, I opened accidentally a book of Monsieur* de Rohan, *intitled* The interest of the Princes of Christendome, *and I fell presently upon a passage where he said, That one of the surest wayes to make ones self Master of a State, is to interpose and make himself arbiter of its differences. I had no need of any other* Oedipus *to expound to me the riddle of the Propheſy, these first motives of suspicion having*

having caſt me into more profound thoughts, I revolved in my mind how France *had managed the whole buſineſs, both before & ſince the beginning of our troubles, and weighed all the circumſtances of this Ambaſſage. Why ſuch a ſolemne Ambaſſage in a time when all things ſeem moſt exaſperated and furtheſt from accommodation? Why then not ſooner, while differences were not yet irreconcileable between the two parties? Why ſuch a warlike Prince, who is not experienced in the affaires of this Kingdome, to manage a negotiation of a peace the moſt nice and intricate that the world at this time affords? Why at the ſame time levying of Souldiers in* Normandy, *when all the other troops are in their quarters? Why therefore ſhould they ſupply one of the parties with mony, when they come to act the perſons of mediatours; if not to caſt wood and oyle into the flame? Why at the ſame time an Agent in* Scotland, *who propounds to them openly a League with* France? *Why begin they onely to turn their cares upon* England, *when they are upon the point of concluding a peace with* Spain? *May not we well judge that it is to prepare themſelves for a new employment? ſince they themſelves confeſſe that their boiling and unquiet temper hath*

need

need of continuall exercise, and that the onely meanes to prevent troubles at home, is continually to furnish them with matter whereupon to evacuate their choler abroad. Why doth onely France *afford us this so suddain and unexpected Charity, after all the fresh wounds which bleed yet among them because of the expulsion of the* Capuchins, *after the continuall cares she hath taken for so many years to lay the foundation of our troubles by the secret negotiations of the Marquis of* Blainville, *by the intriques of the Cardinal of* Richelieu *with* Buckingham, *by the long plots in* Scotland, *and by the open sollicitations of the Marquis* de la Ferr? *by all which they sometimes incged the Kings ministers to make him independent and absolute, offering to that purpose their assistance, and anone they sollicited the States to shake off the yoak of servitude, finally they transformed themselves into a thousand different shapes, till having plunged us deep enough in the gulf, they then call back their Ambassage, to give in appearance some satisfaction to the King, but in truth because his commission was expired. May not we well conclude from all this, that they will now reape the fruit they have so carefully sown and cultivated among st us?*

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From these considerations falling insensibly on those of England, *what need (said I in my self) have we of the intermeddling of strangers? are they more versed in our interests then our selves? can they afford more expedients? are they more sensible of our miseries then those that suffer them? Is it to exhort us, or to constrain us? the first is superfluous; the second dangerous. It must needs be that either in the one case they think to go beyond us in wit, or in the other to master us by force. If peace be profitable for us, have we any need either of a Master to make us know our advantage, or of an Orator to perswade us to it? If it be hurtfull to us, we ought to give them thanks for their advice, but follow that which is better. If the peace be feasible, why should we leave the glory of it to others? if impossible, why loose time in making vain propositions? why should we acquaint strong and ambitious neighbours, and trust the* Philistins *with the secret of our force? Must* England, *that hath in times past compelled* France *to purchase peace, be now constrained to beg it of her? that one of the most considerable and flourishing Monarchies of the world should serve for matter of sport to the vanity of the* French, *and be the first upon whom*

whom they exerciſe the Title they give themſelves of being Arbiters of Chriſtendome? What Counſel then ſhall we follow in this encounter? That of good and wiſe Nature, who having ſeparated us from all other Nations by a vaſt and deep trench, ſilently teacheth us, that the principle of our ſubſiſtence is in our ſelves, and that we ought not to ſubmit our government to the arbitrement of others.

FINIS.